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Kennedy Author Pleads for Book

Denies Breach of Trust

NEW YORK, Dec. 19 (UPI) — The author of "The Death of A President" denies that he either betrayed Mrs. John F. Kennedy's trust or broke the agreement he signed with the slain President's brother.

William Manchester will contend at a court hearing next week that he was released from the terms of the agreement by the Kennedy family last summer.

The substance of Mr. Manchester's defense became clear today in a statement in which the author pleaded that his book on the Kennedy assassination be given a chance to weather the judgment of history.

WILLIAM MANCHESTER

—UPI Photo

On the way to the offices of Look magazine's New York representative are Mrs. Kennedy, Richard Goodwin, right, a former aide to President Kennedy, and her attorney, Simon H. Rifkind, center.

'GIVE IT A CHANCE'

Calling Mrs. Kennedy's charges "cruel and unjust," Mr. Manchester said "The Death of A President" was his responsibility and added: "I am confident that my book can withstand any objective test — particularly the test of time. I ask only that it be given the chance."

Mr. Manchester said President Kennedy, "who was himself an historian, would have wanted his countrymen to know the truth of those terrible days, and I have dedicated myself for nearly three years to reliving and reconstructing them so that the truth could be faithfully and accurately recorded."

Mr. Manchester and his publishers, Harper and Row and Cowles Communications, have been ordered to appear at a hearing Dec. 27 to show cause why a temporary injunction should not be issued to block publication.

The book is scheduled to be published April 7 by Harper and Row. Look Magazine plans to begin a four-part serialization of the book on Jan. 10.

TERMS

In her petition and supporting affidavits filed last Friday, Mrs. Kennedy accused Mr. Manchester of breaching the contract he had signed with her brother-in-law, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. This agreement, it is alleged, stipulated that the book would not be published before Nov. 22, 1968; that the manuscript must receive the prior approval of both Mrs.

Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, and that Mr. Manchester would not sell subsidiary rights to the work without similar approval.

Mr. Manchester said the charges that he violated the terms of the agreement were untrue because he had been released from it.

Noting that Mrs. Kennedy had asked him to write the book, Mr. Manchester said the former First Lady "gave me ten hours of interviews: I did not, indeed could not, have conducted these interviews without her voluntary cooperation. Mrs. Kennedy herself did not ask to see the manuscript and still hasn't. If she had, I would, of course, have given it to her."

Saturday, Mrs. Kennedy and her attorney, Simon H. Rifkind, met with representatives of Look Magazine, not to read the book but to reply to questions concerning events in the narration, Mr. Rifkind said yesterday. "There were no discussions of a settlement at the meeting," he said.

Mrs. Kennedy left the meeting in tears and refused to say anything to newsmen.

In his statement released thru the magazine last night, Mr. Manchester said that instead of reading it herself, "The Kennedy family asked to have the book read by a number of friends and advisers. This was done, and appropriate changes were made in consultation with these distinguished friends.

"Mrs. Kennedy asked to have yet another friend read the book: This too was done and yet more changes were made."